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also have spatial expression. Vaguer local groups, bands, or phratries group together certain clans within one moiety. 614

The tribe is almost a non-existent unit among these people. Its most explicit element is a dialectic unity, but even here the linguistic variation within small local groups is very highly developed. The organized tribe with the use of chiefs does not exist. The tribe is not the war-making group nor does it enforce law. 619 197

It has long been the theory of a great number of anthropological authorities that magic is an individual phenomenon, whereas religion is a social phenomenon. The Durkheim or French school of sociology has been in agreement with this general point of view, although its members differed radically from the American, English, and German schools in their interpretation of religion. Although I am in general agreement with the social interpretation of religion by Durkheim, I cannot follow him or his school in his separation of magic from religion. It is another thesis of this book that magic is also as much a "church" in the Durkheim sense as religion. A test situation is available in this region because, although the peoples of the northern area believe in magic, they have no magicians such as are found in the south. Their substitution of ordinary religious rituals reveals much about the nature of magic. 121

The social mechanisms which are placed in operation within the group by the spread of the knowledge that a black magician has stolen a man's soul, that is, successfully operated on a man, are presented and analyzed in the chapter on magic. When magic is believed to be functioning, all the members of the society act in a manner exactly opposite to the ordinary in their relations with the unfortunate victim. This means that instead of helping to sustain the individual and allowing him to function as a normal person, these protective devices are withdrawn and the attitude is taken that the man is "half dead" and will shortly die. The effect upon the suggestive individual, it is contended in this book, is sufficient to set up certain psycho-physiological reactions which tend to destroy him. When this individual becomes very ill, the movement of social withdrawal from him ceases, and pressure is then applied through mortuary rites which perform the function of attempting to remove him from the society of the living to that of the dead, further destroying his desire to live and frequently bringing about his ultimate death. 761 764

The sacred world of the Murngin is totemically conceived; each individual by virtue of his clan membership possesses and belongs to 771

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a number of totems which are grouped into hierarchies of sacred values. Several fundamental myths organize the conceptual scheme of the social life and of the outside world which surrounds it. Elaborate community rituals allow the individual by means of symbolic dances, songs, and ritual speech to participate physically in the expression of the group's conceptions of the absolute.

The primary purpose of the several chapters on myth and ritual in this book is to attempt to solve the problem of the social meanings of the symbols used in these oral and dramatic rites. The major mythologies are creation stories which tell of the lives of two sisters who lived in the days when the world was different and man and beast had an existence usually the exact opposite of their manner of life today. The dramatic episodes in the journey of these creator women from the unknown interior to the coastal plains are saturated with social meaning and social value. Within them are the ultimate clues to the problem of Murngin social logic.

Generally speaking, it will be the purpose of this book, not only to present the civilization of the Murngin in the description of the various parts of tribal life, but to attempt to discover some of the general principles which govern their social life. To do this we shall examine, particularly in the chapter on technology, their primary adaptation to their natural environment. We shall see what complete technological systems have been organized by them to make and manipulate their tools and implements and adjust themselves as men to the ordered cycle of nature with its rainy season of scarcity and its dry season of plenty. We shall then, in the chapters on local organization, kinship, age grading, and warfare, look at their social order and determine how they regulate the human relations, not only of individual to individual, but of smaller groups to larger groups, of family to clan, and clan to tribe. Finally, we shall present the Murngin religious life and see what it means and how it regulates, organizes, and integrates their behavior into that of a complete and well-organized society.

To be more technical, when we have completed our study we shall have seen the primary articulation of Murngin society with its natural environment by the agency of its technology; secondly, we shall have examined the secondary adaptation of the several tribes by which their social organization disciplines and organizes the human behavior of the individuals of the culture and their relations with one another as members of the several internal institutions of the tribe; and, finally, we shall have viewed the tertiary adaptation of the people,

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Gunabibi or any of the other ceremonies must be completed; scarcity and sickness are likely to result if it is not. 821

The snake, then, in this symbolism of nature, is the wet season, and his actions become significant because he swallows the dry season and regurgitates it, which brings a period of plenty. 825 773 852

A number of additional elements to this symbol are suggested by the four myths. The women are swallowed because of their unclean acts. When the various ceremonial elements are listed, the snake is found to be played almost always by the men, and the Wawilak sisters by the women, uninitiated children, and those who are being initiated.

Initiated and uninitiated meet frequently on the border line of the general camp (to which the women are ceremonially restricted) and the men's grounds. At times the men invade the ground of the women. The formal grouping of the women and children and of the initiated men is emphasized by this spatial arrangement.

In all instances the male snake (Bapa Indi, Father Big) is a ritualization of the male section of society, and the Wawilak sisters who by their uncleanness have provoked the snake (men) into swallowing them are the unritualized or profane sections of the tribe, i.e., the women and uninitiated boys. The only exceptions to this generalization occur when men take the rôle of women on the men's ground from which women are barred. This brings us, I think, to a deeper level of the great Murngin rituals. The men's age grade is a snake and purifying element, and the sociological women's group is the unclean group. The male snake-group in the act of swallowing the unclean group "swallows" the initiates into the ritually pure masculine age grade, and at the same time the whole ritual purifies the whole group or tribe.

The snake is the fertilizing principle in nature according to Murngin symbolism; this explains why it is identified with the men's group rather than with the women; otherwise one would suppose that the male principle, being identified with the positive higher social values, would be associated by the Murngin with the dry season—the time of the year of high social value.

Seven institutions found in Murngin society are the elementary family, the extended kinship structure, the tribe, the clan, the moiety, the subsection, and the horde. The tribe and the horde are amorphous unities which have no formal structure. The unstable elementary family and extended kin groups are organized into larger formal unities by the clan, moiety, and subsection systems. The totemic system 61 771

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of the Murngin is highly elaborated and permeates all the activities of the group and all of its concepts of life in the world about it; but despite this proliferation of detail of totemic ideas, none of the informal structures have totemic elements as definite parts of their organization, whereas all the formal ones have them. The clan has multiple totems attached to it by authority of the various myths, and the moiety is given these same totems generally by the whole myth. For example, all Dua clans theoretically have the Wawilak totems or the Djunkgao totems according to the area in which the moiety is located. The subsections have definite totems given them, although they are of little importance to the Murngin.

The Murngin clan is a social category which gives spatial form to the kinship system. The ordinary kinship reciprocals can exist anywhere, since a man's father or mari could be almost anywhere in the area, and as a kinship term *mari* is not thought of spatially and in a definite locality, although one's actual father is of course identified with one's own clan. With the introduction of the clan system into the larger social order by the selection of certain lines of relatives out of the total group and the rejection of others through the use of the patrilineal unilateral principle, certain people are given a single unity with respect to the rest of the kin community and are at the same time related to a given area of land. By the inclusion of certain people and the exclusion of others from the kinship pattern, one of the chief functions of the kinship reciprocals is expressed, because the principles which exclude most of the people from one clan include these people in other clan groups and thereby create a clan system integrated into the structure of the larger kinship system. All of the people and all of the clans are related by kinship ties. The kinship system functions as an "international" social system by means of the allocation of the clans to one of two groups. This interclan organization is more simply formed than the kinship structure, and from the point of view of the moiety the segmentation into clans gives greater precision and stronger local solidarities for the people within either half of the tribe. The moiety has spatial significance only indirectly and in a derivative sense: the total territory of the clans of one moiety is its only claim to spatial character.

The Wawilak and Djunkgao myths emphasize the spatial characteristic of the clan by naming its various locations and clan wells, and by relating the wanderings of the two women through the various clan territories; further, the women's travels locate and relate the clans

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103 614 773 182 778 wells, both the sacred and the camp names, refer to the totemic objects either directly or indirectly and usually describe some aspect of the clan's country or rationalize its relation to the totem. The totemic mythological ancestors generally have the same names as the well. All of these elements are unified by one or more myths. These myths in turn are dramatized by the various rituals enacted by the clanspeople so that when a man is asked what totems a particular clan possesses, he ordinarily thinks of the rituals they use and the myths the rituals portray.

The names of the clan wells either elaborate the detail of the myth as it is expressed by the totem or they give distinct additions which relate other totemic myths to the well. In no case does the name of a well have no relation to the totems of the clan.

614 778 182 The clansmen are identified with the totemic well by the fact that they come from it and are allowed to be born by the action of the totemic spirit that resides within the well; they are identified with the well because at death they will go back to it and because all of their kin who have died and those living, with whom they have had all of their social relations, are or will be either in this well into which their own soul returns or in other like clan wells; and finally, their well-being and that of their fellow clansmen and of other clans are dependent upon the proper enactment of the seasonal rituals which demonstrate the mana or power of the totem. At death not only does the soul go into the well but it also enters into the totemic emblem itself and becomes a part of it.

551 182 771 The names of the living are all taken from some part of the totemic complex and refer directly or indirectly to the totem. One exception to this is the new group of Malay terms which, however, have been sacralized by the real ancestors' possessing them, and which, after a period of taboo and when the ancestors are within the totemic water holes, are passed on to the living. Another exception to the rule is the group of nicknames, which are also inheritable by the living from the dead. The spiritual life of a Murngin, then, is entirely made up from totemic elements, and his whole participation within that part of the community which makes him a social man and separates him from the adolescent children and women is within the totemic complex itself. (This of course is a fundamental aspect of age grading and is treated under that head.) As a male social personality, a man is part of the totem, and in all his social relations with the male part

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of his group he is identified with the totem. This is true for all other individuals in his adult age grade, so that the totality of the males' individual relations forms the whole of the totemic behavior. It is the sacred tradition of the clan groups, as held in the minds of the individuals of the adult male age grade—plus ritualistic behavior as overt demonstrations of these traditional beliefs held and possessed by the male group—which forms the totemic configuration. The group in this sense does unconsciously worship itself. The totem well and the totemic emblem, being concrete symbols of the totality of the sacred traditions, become symbols of group unity and symbolize the group; and to the extent that the ritual sanctions hold and force subordination of all behavior to their end, the sacred dominates and controls the ordinary life of the individuals within the clans, and therefore of the social life of the clans themselves. The Murngin, when asked why this is so or that exists, always reply, "Wongar did it this way," "Those two old women made it that way," or, "Such and such a totem did so and so in those Wongar times." If their associations are allowed to proceed to deeper levels of explanation, various fundamental myths make their appearance within the thinking, and it soon becomes clear that the categories to which the speakers refer their ideas and the things of the world in their ultimate meanings are these myths. The possession of all land is made absolute and final to the Murngin by the statements of the myth which describe certain behavior of the totems which took place on that land, and which identify the clan and the land as one because the clan has certain totems. The clan's totemic ancestors have certain totemic names, its children arrive by relations with certain totems, it possesses and practices certain rituals, and its dead go to certain totemically named wells. The Murngin clan itself, then, is a membership of a certain unilateral group of people whose unity is expressed by the possession of a totemic configuration and the practice of exogamy.

The mana of the Murngin well is due not to any mundane biological value its water may have for the group, but rather to the spiritual power of the water. If the water had physiologic value alone, then all the water holes would be placed in the same category by the Murngin. As it is, certain wells are considered sacred, and certain others ordinary and placed in a natural category. The spiritual elements in the sacred well include the totem and totemic ancestors as well as the souls of the dead and those who are to be born. The Narra well also

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Masculinity and Femininity as Organizing Principles of the Social Organization as Expressed in the Rituals

562 182 831 In addition to isolating the symbols of the snake as the rainy season and the snake as the men's age-grading group, we can separate out a further symbol which permeates all their thinking and underlies their elaborate organization and social structure. Masculinity is inextricably interwoven with ritual cleanliness, and femininity is equally entwined with the concept of uncleanliness, the former being the sacred principle and the latter the profane. This sexual dichotomy and its correlation with the Murngin beliefs of what are the sacred and profane elements of the group, are again connected with a further principle of human relations, namely, that of superordination and subordination.

562 182 626 •771 The superordinate male group, made sacred through the ritual initiation of its individual members into the sacred group, and maintained as a unit by continual participation in the rituals, subordinates the female group which is unified by virtue of exclusion from the ceremonies and of ritual uncleanliness. The superordination of the male is made a mystery by the nexus of masculinity, sacredness, and the seasonal reproductive cycle. Within this mystery lies one of the strongest and most effective sanctions found in Murngin society. The male sacredness becomes more sacrosanct and "holy" as it progresses into the graded deeper mysteries through the age-graded initiations, and this sacredness controls the profane and less sacred elements of society by the invocation of the direct negative sanctions of ritual: "If you young men do not do this, such and such will happen to you." "This man married wrong or that woman has had illegal sexual relations, and our whole group is endangered ["made sick"]." Obviously it behooves everyone to live up to the code of the society; and if he does not, the whole group feels compelled to act to prevent the contagion of his harmful actions causing a general catastrophe. The ceremonial mysteries of the male group, then, help subordinate not only the women and younger boys but also the men themselves, since they too cannot profane the sacred mysteries by some impure and illegal act; if they do, the male group feels obliged to act. In other words, in the local organization of the whole social group from the pinnacle of the old men's age grade to the bottom age grade of women and children, and from the most remote northeastern clan of Wessel Island to the most southeastern one in the far interior, there is a general subordination of the several institutions of the social organization

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to the higher sacred realm which constitutes the Murngin system of totemism. It is in the ultimate sanctions of the totemic system that Murngin society finds its final unity. The general technology, which is the community's practical adaptation to its natural environment, is disciplined and organized through the instrumentation of social organization. For example, the rules of conduct for various kin personalities, such as gawel and waku, or father and son, regulate the distribution and consumption of the social goods produced by the technology; or, to take another example, the rules of clan membership demand certain divisions of foods, other creature necessities, and services. These and the other laws of the social organization not only discipline the economic life but also relate the individual members and the institutions of the community to each other.

The totemic system provides, first, a final set of absolute sanctions for the society which places a pressure on all the members to perform the acts dictated by the rules of the social organization; and, second, a set of concepts organized into a unified system which provides a mechanism for group integration. The totemic emblem is a concrete symbol of these two basic concepts, and an object which can be manipulated by a series of rituals (primarily the Narra), which elaborate, dramatize, and tie together the various sacred concepts of the myths in the sacred dances and songs. The latent content of these rituals is the myth, and within the myth are the fundamental symbols of the social concepts of totemism. These were the symbols which we analyzed and for which we gave the native interpretation in Chapters IX and X and summarized in the beginning of this chapter. In the present chapter we also presented some of the concepts which underlie the oral rite and dramatic ritual. We found that there is a general idea which surrounds natural phenomena, and that nature is seen as a unity, as an alternation of the dry and rainy season (that is, in the myth the seasonal alternation is symbolized by the conflict of the snake and the two women). The natural phenomena are all organized in this dichotomy. We saw that the seasonal variations are given social categories by the identification of the rainy season with the male principle and the dry period with the female principle. This classification is mechanically accomplished in Murngin thinking by giving the seasons and the age-grade dichotomy the same symbols. The relation of the social category to the natural one is implicit in the myth's account of the wronging of the two women by the ancestors of man

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771 182 and the profanation of the sacred pool. The general activity of nature, that is, the alternation of the seasons, is the effect of man's uncleanliness in the mythologic past and in the present, as the Djunkgao interpretations will later demonstrate. It is therefore necessary continually to cleanse the group and its individuals of all social uncleanliness. This is the function of the Narra rites and of the Garma, Marndiella, Djungguan, Gunabibi, and Ulmark.

That which organizes the two categories (the seasonal reproductive cycle of nature and the male-cleanliness female-impurity dichotomy of society) into one is the totemic symbol which can be manipulated by ritual and gives man an effective control over nature and an effective negative sanction over the members of his society. The rituals must be properly conducted yearly to keep the group and its individuals ritually clean; and in these rituals the manipulation of the sacred totem insures the proper function of the seasons, a sufficient production of food, and a continuation of the natural surroundings proper for man. Thus that which is beyond man's technology or beyond his real powers of control becomes capable of manipulation because its symbols can be controlled and manipulated by the extraordinary powers of man's rituals. At the same time the identification, in the totemic concept, of the male and female principles with the seasonal cycles gives the adult men's group the necessary power to enforce its sanctions; the providing world of nature will not function if the rules of society are flouted and man's uncleanliness contaminates nature. Hence everyone must obey. If he does not by his own volition, then he must be forced to, by restriction of his larger participation in the group (as, for example, barring him from higher age grades until he behaves himself); or by the direct sanction of clan feud; or, within the clan, by allowing the offending member to be killed by another clan. As we have said, the women's sociological group and women as physiological beings are thus subordinate to the men's group, and the Murngin age-grading system has been built on this principle. Like other Australian tribes, this peoples' "political" control might be termed a gerontocracy, but it is more than merely the rule of old men.

182 713 852 The analysis of the four myths shows that, besides the fundamental snake-swallowing-the-women symbol, the Gunabibi uses the reproductive cycle, and the Ulmark the animals-running-away-from-the-unclean-women as important motifs. The concluding acts of the Maru-

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CHAPTER XII

MORTUARY RITES

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I. General Summary of the Nature of Murngin Mourning Rites

The very elaborate Murngin mortuary rite is the final rite of passage in the life cycle of the individual. The first rite of passage occurs at the individual's "birth," i.e., when the father is mystically informed of the child's arrival in his mother's womb; here the emphasis is on the male parent's changed status in the community by virtue of his consummation of a family of procreation. It is only when he is a big boy that the male child becomes the center of attention in a rite of passage; he then, through an initiatory ritual by which he becomes a part of the sacred world and partially participant in its functions, changes his status from one socially equivalent to a woman's to that of a "young man." The mark is left upon him by the removal of his foreskin at the climactic rite which is purificatory and associated with the reproductive attributes of nature (see Djungguan, et cetera). At later transitions in his age grading he goes through further initiations, *all of which increase his status within the general community by enlarging his contact with the world of the sacred and the totemic spirit.* In his increasing knowledge of the totem and in his participation in the sacred rituals, myths, and mana of the totem he has his attention fixed on the center and focal point of all totemic sacredness, the totemic well. This increase of status in life by ritual initiation is the general age-grade structure. When he is socially an old man he sees the highest grade of totem which lies deepest in the water of the totemic well. There is nothing more he can do in life to come into a deeper and more fundamental contact with the sacred; but death, the final rite of passage, transfers him from all the world of the profane and puts him (his soul) entirely into the world of the sacred with the totem in the totemic well. The age grading, then, throughout his life has been a gradual increase in his sacred participation, with a consequent lessening of his social participation within

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the profane (since he gives an increasing proportion of his time to ritual activities), until finally he returns to where he first originated, the totemic well.

The father's dream at a child's birth is an expression of the relation of the ordinary to the sacred, since the dream announces a soul's entering the world of the living; and the mortuary ceremony is a ritualization of the relation of the once living soul[1] and also of his mourning kin to the world of the sacred and the dead. The mourning rites symbolize the relationship of these two realms in the beliefs of the Murngin.

This chapter will first describe, without interpretation except that of the natives, the mortuary rituals and afterwards present interpretative conclusions. It might be stated that when all the field material which is given here was collected the author had no idea of where the facts led, and it was only by an analysis of the material and by relating it to the rest of the social configuration that the general ideas concerning the aboriginal mourning rites were discovered.

II. Murngin Death, Mortuary and Mourning Ceremonies and Customs

When it is believed that a man is very close to death[2] his relatives gather about him and wail; some of them, in a plaintive voice, sing the garma water cycle of songs of his moiety and clan, the leader usually beating time on his singing sticks. The dying man is supposed to listen to these songs and to follow their suggestions; if he cannot understand what is being said, it is believed that the spirit of his marikmo (father's father) or his mari will come when he hears, and talk to the soul which is about to leave the body and instruct it on what it has to do.

"We sing these songs to make that soul a good one, so he won't hurt any of us." Sometimes when a man has been speared and is still alive a song is sung over him to tell him to die in the proper manner and not allow his soul to make any difficulties for those who are alive. A man who has been badly injured in a spear fight and thinks that he is about to die likes to have this singing because it soothes his pain and removes any worry about the disposition of his soul. "That fellow who has been speared says, 'There is no time for me to live now. I am

[1] All Murngin individuals possess two souls: one (warro) which is from the totem well and important, and the other which is a trickster (mokoi).

[2] See "The Moon and the Parrot Fish," Appendix VIII, Myths, a rather amusing story which accounts for death.

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spirit. It can be seen reflected in the water when one looks in it. It comes to one during good dreams. The warro, when a man dies, becomes "all the same as a fish." It lives with and in the totemic emblems. "He walks about with the ranga in the water down below in the well. Our old people reckon this way: he must be all the same as a fish because if a man's canoe tips over out in the middle water of the ocean that old relative's warro comes and helps us, saves our life and takes us up to the shore. If my son went out in the deep water with his canoe he would call out for Banitja [one of the totems of his clan]. After he had taken sweat from under his arm and spit into the water, then he would call out for the warro of his marikmo and mari. Those warros of his mari and marikmo would come all the same as a fish to help him. Warros swim and look like fish. When I look in the water he looks like me. Banitja and warros will also save a man from the sharks as well as from drowning. All the people have warros."

The trickster soul is called shadow soul before death and mokoi when it leaves the body and goes into the jungle and bush country. "Our old people reckon that the shadow soul is all the same as a bad spirit. It's that thing that makes me bad. My shadow always comes with me. The shadows of other things and creatures [beside man] are not souls but only shadows." The mokoi soul is supposed to live more or less all over the body. It is a kind of vague duplicate of it. Sometimes one is told that only the head of a man is made into a mokoi at his death and that mokoi has no body. In the pictures drawn of it and the representations made in the dances, the mokoi is always possessed of a body, but it is distorted and made to appear ugly and unpleasant.[1]

The warro is constantly undergoing change of status. It originates in the totem well, comes to its human father in a dream under miraculous circumstances where it is directed to its mother's womb, lodges there, is born in a normal number of months, and then lives in the heart of the new human organism during the period of the organism's life of the flesh unless it is stolen by a black sorcerer. After death there is a period of some indecision between the land of the living and the land of the dead, but it finally returns to the totemic well whence it came. It is in the symbol of the soul and its relations to the sacred and profane elements in Murngin civilization that we find mirrored the structure and values of the society. The soul supplies the eternal element to the cultural life of an individual Murngin. It lifts man from

[1] The Murngin ideas about the mokoi spirit are varied and somewhat confused.

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the simple profane animal level and allows him to participate fully in the sacred eternal values of the civilization that was, is, and will be. It finally and eternally ties the man whose heart it occupies to his totem, the symbol of all clan unity in Murngin culture, since the soul at death is one of the prominent elements in the configuration of associated items found in the clan's totemic water, the water which is the essence of life. Here live the great totemic ancestors who existed in the time of the Wawilak creator sisters when the Wongar totems walked the earth, and whose sacred names are used by the profane living only when these living have been purified by the great rituals, when they are part of the sacred and eternal elements in the culture, when man and his totems participate as one in the totemic rituals. Here, too, in the well, lie the totemic ancestors who died at the beginning of time, and the more recently dead whose emotional bonds with the living are still strong. The more recent ancestors who have gone through the long purifying mortuary ritual which removed all the profane elements of the personality (whose mokoi spirit has gone into the bush with his other evil comrades) are, in their nature, of such sacredness that they can be absorbed into the body of the totem itself. And when the totemic essence of the totem animals is induced into the emblem, they also enter and participate in the spiritual life of the Murngin during the great rituals and then return to the sacred water hole. After the ritual, the emblem is buried beneath the mud of the totem well and allowed to rot, and the ancestor spirits and the totemic spirit return to the subterranean depths. Man goes through exactly the same cycle of existence as the totemic spirit. The totemic spirit enters into the sacred water hole, goes through the ordinary water at the top of the well into the subterranean depths, and finally into the totem water beneath, where the Wongar ancestors live, becoming a part of the sacred configuration. The soul does exactly the same thing.

The soul, the totemic spirit, the Wongar or totemic ancestors, are all expressions of the fundamental sacred essence, the ultimate symbol of which is the totemic well, which is the repository of all the individual items which have been or will be incarnate in man or his religious objects.

The kinship organization classifies the social elements of ordinary behavior. The primary kinship system regulates the basic behavior such as marriage, descent of children, gift-making, economic behavior, et cetera. The moiety and clan generalize and classify this detailed kinship behavior into larger patterns; and they also articulate the ordinary

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773 Yeramalindji (Yalmanindji), a blackened mass, still in its original
796 shape, lying in the Nanggoru.
171 One special feature of this "Mother Place" was that on each of the
walls of both the Kanalina (the oval billabong) and the Nanggoru
[532] (the semi-circular trench or "river"), the rainbow serpent, here
called Muit, was engraved. Apart from what informants said, there
[346] was no mistaking the drawing. The walls were of hard clay and about
2 feet and a little more in depth.

Finally, the "Mother" ritual has spread north from the Lower Victoria River as far as Port Keats, where in 1944 the elders were assimilating the doctrine of the "Old Woman" (exoterically), but the desirable mother (esoterically), and the bullroarer with snake symbolism.*

The Appeal of the Kunapipi

771 A cult which spreads throughout a vast region as indicated in the above outline, and spreads irresistibly, must satisfy a spiritual or
796 psychological need and make a captivating appeal. There is no mistaking the grip which the doctrine of the "Mother" and the Snake has on the initiated, or their fervour and faith. But, why does the cult appeal and grip in this way?

Let us outline its significant features. It highlights the maternal, nourishing, reproductive, and indeed creative, principle in nature and man, though not denying the male principle. That is, it associates the cycle of the tropical seasons, and the increase of human beings and of natural species with the concept of Mother—of birth from the womb.
[831] Further, it correlates this with sexual activity in which the male or inseminating principle is involved. In the former aspect, we have the Mother, symbolized by the ceremonial "Mother Place", and in particular by the earth womb, the *nanggoru*, for, indeed, she is the earth. In the latter case we see the symbolism of the Great Snake: the Rainbow Snake, and the Yermalindji.

796 Further, in the ritual, the male actors simulate sex intercourse,
786 which symbolizes both the impregnation or else the quickening of the Mother herself, and also the intercourse of the animals represented in the rite. It is done for her and through her for them and all nature. Finally, the actual sexual intercourse between the actors and selected women near the ceremonial ground, as part of the total ritual, not only witnesses to the indispensable rôle of women in reproduction, but also makes the "Mother's" life-producing principle or power operative. Just as in arid Australia, the actors cause blood from their arm vein or genital organ to flow on to the symbolic representation of the totem or totemic ancestor, giving it or
[789] him power to increase its kind; so too in Arnhem Land the actors'

* Mr. F. Parkes, a member of the Air Force, gained the confidence of these men, and recorded all he could.

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PREFACE

The main purpose of this work is to indicate some fundamental features of an Australian Aboriginal religious cult, the Kunapipi, in one particular area. North-eastern Arnhem Land has been selected, not because it presents a more exotic background or more spectacular ceremonies, but because the cult as seen here is fairly well defined, and because its religious concepts are important and significant to the people concerned. In this region there are several fairly well integrated religious cults, having a common theme and fundamental intent. Most of them, however, have complex local associations, whereas the Kunapipi ceremonies, which have been introduced into north-east Arnhem Land, belong to a configuration which is still widely diffused throughout the Northern Territory.

The plan is to examine the cult as seen in this one region, to consider its relative importance in adjacent areas, and so prepare the way for a more intensive analysis of it in the central-western part of the Northern Territory. Although introduced, the Kunapipi has become closely associated with more truly north-east Arnhem Land mythology, in particular, the Wauwalak, which is used to explain it; but the Wauwalak mythology itself was at some time diffused into north-eastern Arnhem Land, apparently from the same direction as this much later ritual.

The Kunapipi songs of Yirrkalla (in north-east Arnhem Land) have been derived from those commonly in use further south. By examining relevant songs and mythology of adjacent areas, it is possible to trace the movement and diffusion of this cult from one group to another, and to discuss (for instance) the source of the Yirrkalla Kunapipi. This is not really difficult, for the Kunapipi (in all the regions mentioned in this work) possesses the common theme of a Great Mother, expressed as either a single or a dual personality, her power being extended to her daughters, the Wauwalak, Ka'lerika'lering or Mungamunga. She is said to be responsible for the constant fertility of human beings and other natural species, and the continuing sequence of the seasons, as well as for the general similarity of her ritual, emblems and songs. In addition, certain "key" words, which are sacred, are used widely to designate ceremonies, objects and sacred beings.

What does this cult mean to its postulants? Why does it exist? What do the people themselves believe that they are receiving from it? Its basic intent seems to express the latent or conscious desires of

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121 the individuals who combine to form the social group that carries
773 out these ceremonies. And if this be so, does the cult adequately ful-
794 fil the wishes of the people, or do they feel that something is lacking?
796 All this raises a variety of problems, of which only a few can be
771 treated here. But to understand Aboriginal religion, its belief and rites, it is essential to have thorough knowledge of the mythology and songs of at least one particular cult. It is not enough merely to observe rituals performed on the sacred ground, and then to theorize from such observations; for Aboriginal sacred ritual is an acting out of mythology, and mythology, in turn, is recorded in elaborate and detailed song cycles which enshrine the meaning and significance of the ritual. Therefore, conclusions can be reached only after an analysis of these three aspects: ritual, mythology and song. This implies that the doctrines, intent and function of a specific religious cult, such as the Kunapipi, may be derived from analysis of the mythological, historical and present-day data available to the field-worker, especially as the cult is still a functioning element in the life of the people. From these we may arrive at some general conclusions con-
121 cerning the essential nature of Australian Aboriginal religion. Such
771 conclusions, however, do not necessarily provide a basis for interpreting "primitive" religion generally, nor a peg upon which to hang theories relating to the origin of religion. Indeed, it is unwise to describe Australian Aboriginal religion by that controversial and dubious term, "primitive". Aboriginal religious concepts, like those of Europe, have been changing through the ages in association with the cultural needs of the people. In the process, Aboriginal religion has developed into a mature and vivid faith, mediated through beliefs and rites, and giving to its adherents a deep satisfaction and happiness.

The whole question of Australian Aboriginal religion needs far
121 more consideration than has been accorded it to date;[1] but before
771 any reliable theoretical studies can be made, it is essential that anthro-
794 pological field-workers should provide considerably more data than are at present available. Here, in this volume, is a study of one religious cult. But it should be kept in mind that this work deals with only one cult in one region, with reference to its diffusion in adjacent areas; other cults exist side by side with the Kunapipi, and still others are found in various parts of Aboriginal Australia. Whether all these cults are basically similar, and have a common intent and function within the separate native cultures, or whether they are fundamentally dissimilar, has yet to be determined.

1. E.g. E. Durkheim, *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, Paris, 1912; H. Hubert and M. Mauss, *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice*, *Mélanges d'histoire des religions*, Paris, 1909; R. H. Lowie, *Primitive Religion*, New York, 1924; G. Róheim, *Australian Totemism*, London, 1925, and *Animism, Magic, and the Divine King*, New York, 1930; P. Radin, *Primitive Religion, Its Nature and Origin*, New York, 1937.

Several aspects should perhaps be mentioned in this *Preface*, since they throw new light on the study of Aboriginal religion. 121 771

Throughout the greater part of the Northern Territory the concept of a Fertility Mother is found. She is the direct or indirect inspiration of all religious thought and activity. She is the central theme of the Kunapipi ceremonies. Indeed, Kunapipi is one of her sacred names. Her "eternal" presence throws new light on the philosophy of totemism in the region, for it was she, herself without a totem, who brought the totems into being. Animals, birds, reptiles, Spirits, inanimate objects, physiographic features, became totemic through her divine influence and association, or because they served some purpose in relation to her "eternal" rôle of creator, cause of birth and rebirth and seasonal fluctuations. In the Kunapipi then, the totem bears the sacred imprint of its religious or mythological connection with the Mother. In this region, therefore, the study of totemism is a means to an end: and that end, where we have any detailed knowledge, is the Mother herself, existing as a divine Being serving as an explanation of religious thought, belief and behaviour. 771 776

This leads to the realm of the sacred, but the problem of the demarcation between the sacred and the profane, and of the part played by women in sacred ritual, particularly in the Kunapipi itself, needs to be considered far more intensively than is possible here.

Religious thought and action permeate the whole of an indigenous society, and are not manifested only on the sacred ceremonial ground when groups meet for the performance of ritual. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to separate the sacred from the profane. A man or woman does not receive sacred power directly or indirectly from the Sacred Mother only on the ceremonial ground, through the performance of ritual. He, or she, possesses innately a sacred or divine essence, which exists apart from any external coercion: whatever his or her degree of participation in the sacred collective rites, this personal germ of sacredness remains intact, and cannot be destroyed even by death. It seems probable however that this individual germ, which may perhaps be described as a person's own sacred aura, may be intensified on the occasion of religious ceremonies. The spirit of a man (or woman) is derived directly from the Sacred Mother; his bones themselves are possessed of a sacred quality, being likened to the *rangga* emblems associated with the great ancestral Beings; and he himself bears "inside" (sacred) and "outside" (secular) personal names, which are in many cases of sacred origin. 121 771 778 [774]

Women have a far greater part to play in sacred religious ceremonies than has hitherto been observed. This is particularly the case in north-eastern Arnhem Land; and in the performance of the Kunapipi they are directly responsible for the efficacy of a whole series of ceremonies. Because they do not take part in all the rituals of a particular cult, this does not mean that they are excluded or are 121 562 771 796

121 562 771 796 [831] [776] consequently irreligious. Woman, or more precisely her unique ability to create, together with man's power to inseminate, has become a feature of native religion in these areas, crystallized in the concept of the Mother, whom we see manifested in (for instance) the Kunapipi. The aura thus surrounding, and radiating from, this Fertility Mother has been extended in some degree to native women to-day.

121 794 773 776 Another problem arising from the study of the Kunapipi cult which needs detailed consideration, is that of individual origins. Throughout the greater part of the Territory, specific cults have been inspired either by one or, in some cases, by two or three Ancestral Beings. Through their own personality and power, it is said, they succeeded in indoctrinating the whole social group in which they found themselves. They brought with them what appear to have been new ideologies, with attendant ritual, emblems, songs, and mythology in which they themselves now play a dominant part. This individual aspect is apparent in the case of the Kunapipi Mother, who arose from the waters of the Roper River Mouth (*vide* Chapter XI), bringing with her the main features of what we now call the Kunapipi cult. The same principle is evident in the appearance of the Djanggawul (*vide* Chapter I) and of Laintjung (Chapter I) in north-eastern Arnhem Land; both these Beings appear to have inspired virile cults, substantiated by mythology which details their adventures, their activities and beliefs. The society itself, of course, must have been more or less receptive to the introduction of these religious beliefs. That is to say, the religious leader, whether Kunapipi, [182] Laintjung or the Djanggawul Brother or Sisters, was able to impress his (or her) own point of view on that society, which in turn was willing to adopt his views and ideas, so giving social impetus to the introduced religion.

This aspect of individual origins, in relation to specific Australian Aboriginal cults, is an important one. The contention, which may be substantiated by mythology and the traditional song-cycles, is that a powerful personality—such as the Great Mother, the acknowledged spiritual leader and inspiration of the Kunapipi cult—possessed of ability beyond the ordinary, can and does exert his or her influence on the society in which he is either temporarily or permanently living; and that influence, helped by favourable circumstances, is sufficient to establish a cult which attracts adherents, and becomes in its own right an important social function and institution.

121 771 773 794 776 The migration of Ancestral Beings, like Kunapipi and others, into a particular society, bringing with them a religious cult, is a fairly general phenomenon in Aboriginal religious life. Major Ancestral Beings very rarely arise in the country of the people with whom they are mythologically associated, or in the society which serves as the "incubator" for their specific ideology. Rather, the individual (in

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the guise of an Ancestral Being) is the proselytizer, the carrier of the germ of a religious idea, which is adopted by, and modified to suit, the social group in which he finds himself. Whether he brought with him the ingredients of that religion from his own "home", or whether it took shape in consequence of his contact with the alien people, is a matter for conjecture.

The diffusion of Aboriginal religious cults, such as the Kunapipi, also presents some interesting features. A certain amount of more or less "pure" evangelization has occurred in this respect; individual cult leaders, of both historic and contemporary society, have been interested in furthering the activities of the cult. But in their successful and unsuccessful attempts to introduce their particular beliefs into other groups, they take only the basis of their cult life, and do not as a rule attempt to superimpose their own cultural ideas and organization. In north-eastern Arnhem Land, for example, the Kunapipi, recognized by natives themselves as an introduced theme, has been fairly well integrated with existing social organization, religious life, and secular beliefs; even its mythology has been altered to meet the demands of local ethics, while the alien songs are interpreted in the light of indigenous criteria. Nevertheless, the basic ideology and construction of the Kunapipi cult remain: and it is this aspect which really concerns the proselytizer. The same process may be observed in other regions, such as western Arnhem Land, the Daly River-Port Keats area, and west-central Northern Territory.

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A word should be said concerning the presentation of Kunapipi Song Cycles (that is, in Chapters VII, VIII, X, and XI). Their value lies in their substantiation of the cult's doctrine, explaining its outward expression in ritual and in the use of ceremonial emblems and objects. Such traditional songs ensure that the original intent of the cult is not lost or radically misinterpreted. To-day, however, misinterpretation is possible as a result of conflicting loyalties arising from the contact of Aboriginal with European culture. In order to restrict ourselves to the literal interpretation of these songs, it has been found necessary to present them with an interlinear translation, a general rendering, and a brief commentary based on native interpretation: this method makes available the maximum amount of data. The phonetic script used conforms to that of the International Phonetic Association,[2] amended for use in Australia by Dr. A. Capell.[3]

2. G. Noel-Armfield, *General Phonetics*, 1931, pp. 21-23. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, "A Preliminary Report of Field-Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia", *Oceania Bound Reprint*, Sydney, 1945, pp. 262-264, or *Oceania*, Vol. XV, No. 1, pp. 50-52.

3. A. Capell, *Methods and Materials for Recording Australian Languages*, Sydney, 1945 (reprinted from *Oceania*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, pp. 144-176). Since the complete phonetic script was not available for rendering native words in this volume, some equivalents in ordinary English lettering have been used.

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Arnhem Land, social organization: the division of society into two groups (that is, moieties) was, with the kinship structure, the traditional norm. But within recent years the sub-section system has been introduced from the south and south-west, coming up the coast through Rose River and Blue Mud Bay. In the Milingimbi region it seems to have been introduced at an earlier date, through contact with the inland tribes, particularly the Reinbaranga. At Yirrkalla, however, the sub-sections are not yet completely co-ordinated with the kinship terminology, and among the older people are not in constant use. Certain sub-section terms are however mentioned from time to time in this work, in reference to Ancestral Beings; they will not be discussed in this context, and reference should be made to the work of L. Warner, T. T. Webb, A. P. Elkin and R. Berndt.[3]

c The Religious Quality of Yirrkalla Social Life:

Yirrkalla society, like most other Australian Aboriginal communities, whether of desert, hill or coast, must forage for its food, the abundance of which depends on the particular environment. On the north coast and rivers of Arnhem Land, food of many varieties is available in great quantities. In spite of this, however, its constant supply is said to depend on the rhythm of the seasons, upon the mythical characters of the Eternal Dreaming Period, and on the performance of associated ritual and ceremony. In order to ensure a constant supply of food, in the form of natural species generally, these aborigines rely on the great ceremonial cycles of *djunggawon*, *kunapipi*, *ngu:rlmak*, and the *dua* and *jiritja nara* cycles which are usual in this region. These rituals, associated with the principal Ancestral Beings such as Djanggawul, Wauwalak, Laintjung, Banaitja and Baijini, are the basis of indigenous religion. But they are not concerned merely with the provision of food. Their purpose is, primarily, to ensure the continuation of the human species; the increase of all other animals, birds, fish, vegetable matter, and so on, is only an adjunct to the main theme.

This religion then is a dominant quality in Yirrkalla life, and is reflected in all its institutions and conventional forms of behaviour. It concerns itself with the fructification of all living things, and in that category human beings themselves are considered the most important. As, however, the Kunapipi cult is especially concerned with their rhythmic sequence of birth and rebirth, it is crystallized in a definite concept of a Fertility Mother. Moreover, the cult is concerned with the coming and going of the seasons, the appearance and disappearance of vegetable and plant matter, and the propaga-

3. *Vide* L. Warner, *op. cit.* 1937, pp. 116–124, and his Morphology and Functions of the Australian Murngin Type of Kinship, *American Anthropologist*, n.s. 33, 2, 184; T. T. Webb, *op. cit.* pp. 406–408; A. P. Elkin, *op. cit.* pp. 412–416; R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*, Chap. I.

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tion of other natural species—all phenomena which are necessary for the continuance and well-being of the people themselves. In keeping with this doctrine, a natural development has been the stress on procreation—the importance of pregnancy and child-birth, and the essential sequence of sexual intercourse and conception, expressed particularly in ritual and long song cycles.

In order to understand Kunapipi cult life and belief, it is necessary to summarize very briefly some of the other cults which flourish beside it in this area.

The Djanggawul myth, consisting of several hundreds of lengthy songs, relates the adventures of two men and two women, who in the Dreaming Period landed at Port Bradshaw, on the north-east Arnhem Land coast. They had journeyed across the sea from an island called Bralku, now known as the *dua* home of the dead, somewhere beyond Groote Eylandt. These Ancestral Beings are known generally as the Djanggawul, but had their own personal names. The leader was Djanggawul himself; the two women were his sisters, the younger Maralaitj, and the older Pildjiwuraroiju; and their companion was Bralbral, who plays only a minor part in this great cycle. In their canoe they brought a large conical *ngainmara* mat, which is now used particularly by the women, and also certain sacred *rangga* sticks possessing life-giving qualities. The mat symbolized the uterus; the *rangga* sticks were penes, and when not being used ritually, were kept hidden in the *ngainmara*.

As the Djanggawul journeyed along the coast, they met other Ancestral Beings like Laintjung and the Baijini, and Spirits such as Pomapoma, Kultana, Woijal, Burulu-burulu and others; but none of these had the procreating powers of the great Djanggawul. Djanggawul had an elongated penis; and his two sisters had long clitori which dragged on the ground as they walked. Djanggawul had sexual relations with his sisters, so that they were continually pregnant. From time to time, at the camps where they stayed, he would lift their clitori to one side, and put his hand up into the uteri to remove many children of both sexes: these were the ancestors of the present aborigines. The song cycle features the perpetual pregnancy of the two sisters, their uteri being likened to the *ngainmara* mats which they brought with them, while the people who are removed from them in childbirth are the *rangga*. It is said that a person's bones are like *rangga*, inherited from both the father and mother, who in turn inherited theirs through the generations of ancestors, right back to the Eternal Times of Djanggawul and the creative heroes. Therefore, at death, a person's material remains, as well as his spiritual substance, must be treated with respect, and surrounded by ritual.

An important aspect of this myth, second only to the theme of fertility, concerns the institution of sacred ritual. In the beginning,

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778 Before turning to our main study, we may mention briefly the
532 presence of material emblems and symbols in religious life. This north-eastern culture, far more than those to the south and south-west, pays great attention to the outward expression of religious and esoteric ideology, both as a guide to ritual behaviour, and as a means of impressing certain concepts on the minds of neophytes. In addition to copies of the *rangga* introduced by Djanggawul, Laintjung and others, there are many beautifully made *rangga*[4] relating to various totemic objects and natural species, as well as to human organs and ancestral people, used constantly as "high" *rangga* in the *nara* rituals. They are often stylized, made from various hard woods, cane or paperbark, bound with jungle-fibre twine, painted with clan totemic designs, and ornamented with colourful feathered strings. There are also human figures, carved from blocks of wood, and decorated in the same way. In the Wauwalak ceremonies many other sacred, *mareiin*, objects are used: the *uwar* drum of the *ngurlmak*, the *jelmalandji* "posts" and forked stick *djepalmandji* of the *kunapipi*, the *julunggul* trumpets and dancing posts of the *djunggawon*. There are also bark paintings, with sacred totemic clan designs, used on the ceremonial ground, or with copies of chest drawings.

771 All these, for the aborigine, are concrete expressions of his
778 religious concepts; they prepare his mind to accept the essence of sacred dogma, and to grasp its significance. As symbols, they keep
182 alive for him the reality of traditional belief. Faith is essential for social cohesion, giving meaning and sanction to behaviour patterns
177 and institutions; its presence has been far more apparent in Aboriginal societies throughout Australia than in contemporary European groups. The majority of these aborigines, before contact, believed implicitly in the essential goodness of their own way of life; all was explained, each member of the community had a definite place in the scheme of things, and the future was well determined. To-day, how-
177 ever, the native on the fringe of European culture finds that social
182 conditions are changing, his accepted beliefs have been sharply
771 questioned, and an alien ideology is being more intensively enforced. His ceremonies are performed less frequently, his great song cycles sung less fervently, and his sacred objects and paraphernalia are gradually losing their meaning and function. The cohesive and integrating qualities of his religion and mythology are weakened, and finally destroyed. The balance of his own cultural structure, with all its apparent weaknesses and inconsistencies, is upset by intensive external pressure and "civilizing" influences. No longer is the pattern of his life determined by a traditional code. Instead, he discovers himself to be relying more and more constantly on alien beliefs and ideas; but owing to the suddenness of the change, and his inability

4. *Vide* A. P. Elkin, R. and C. Berndt, *Art in Arnhem Land*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1950, illustrated.

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to adjust himself immediately to the new ways and actions, these fail to satisfy his needs, and so he becomes frustrated and unhappy.

We are, however, principally concerned here with the aborigines' adjustment to their own indigenous religion; and within this field we have selected one particular cult, the Kunapipi, which has wide implications and seems to be diffused over the northern part of the Northern Territory.

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Territory,[4] artists depict human beings, as totemites, flowing from the uterus of the Mother into the round "ring place" (or ceremonial ground) for the performance of sacred rites. The "ring place" is itself the uterus of the Mother. To-day, in the really important sacred ceremonies, a special ring place is used for the performance of these rituals. As the neophytes leave the camp for the sacred ground, they themselves are said to become increasingly sacred, and to enter the Mother; they go into her uterus, the ring place, as happened in the beginning. When the ritual is completed the Mother "lets them out"; they emerge from the ring place, and pass once more into ordinary life. These ring places vary in shape from place to place, but all symbolize the Mother's uterus. The sacred ceremonies associated with this Fertility Woman are called in pidgin English "Big Sunday", inferring a sacred atmosphere from the European connotation of the word Sunday, while the term refers also to "sandy place", the soft ground upon which the sacred dancing is performed. The appellation "Big Sunday", in some regions, may also be derived from the term "Centre" place, which refers to the sacred ceremonial ground.

All Kunapipi ritual, irrespective of region, has thus a common theme. We find in it the return to the Mother's uterus, and the eventual emergence, when the postulants come out from their sacred ritual refreshed, and as "new" men (that is, it is like a "rebirth"): this symbolic enactment of birth brings with it a renewal of ideals, energy and faith. Fertility and the supplying of food, sexual pleasure and satisfaction, solidarity within the group, and an undividing faith in the divine truth of the cult—all these elements are present. Food and sex, fundamental in human life, and consequently in religion, owe their continuance, it is said, to the Eternal Mother. It is not surprising that people living in such close proximity to nature, with few artificial distractions, should recognise the fundamental importance of female fertility, and see in it a central theme of religion.

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In north-eastern Arnhem Land, the Kunapipi cult is not yet deeply entrenched, since it has been introduced within comparatively recent times. Its earliest infiltration took place through the Reinbaranga (sometimes termed Rembranga, and localized in south-western Arnhem Land) and Burera tribes and so into Milingimbi, where Professor L. Warner witnessed some of its rituals twenty years ago. From this centre it spread westwards towards Goulburn Islands and Oenpelli,[5] and eastwards to Elcho Island and Arnhem Bay. But it does not seem to have gripped, at that time, the imagina-

4. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *op. cit. Oceania*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Plates I to III; and R. and C. Berndt, Aboriginal Art in Central-Western Northern Territory, *Meanjin*, Spring, 1950, pp. 183–188, ten plates.
5. R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section IX.

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The Kunapipi should be primarily *dua*, but a split of some kind seems to have taken place, so that now the *jiritja* moiety groups have a separate song cycle; this may perhaps be explained by the fact that, in the eyes of the north-east Arnhem Landers, the Kunapipi is of alien origin. The division of ritual activities between both *dua* and *jiritja* people is of importance in ascertaining the relationship of individual aborigines to the Wauwalak ceremonies. This aspect is most apparent in the manufacture of the *jelmalandji* "posts"; but we can touch upon it only briefly here. We are concerned not so much with the individual's attitude towards his ritual and mythology, or with the relationship of the various neophytes to one another on the sacred ground, as with the fundamental doctrine of this particular Aboriginal religion and its expression in ritual. Therefore the individual must play only a subsidiary part in this specific study. 796 616 [771]

After the swallowing of the Wauwalak, the Two Sisters "changed" their names to Ka'lerika'lering (or Girilinggiriling, that is, "having been swallowed") so that they "could belong to the Kunapipi side". That is, in theory, during the performance of the Kunapipi, the Sisters are no longer called by the term Wauwalak, although this is still employed in the *ngu:rlmak* and *djunggawon*. We shall, however, when referring to the Kunapipi, continue to call them Wauwalak. 773 796

Shortly before this, an unmarried male python, called *Lu'ningu* (that is, from *lu'ni*, a young unmarried man; *lu'ningu*, "place of young unmarried men"), had come out of the sacred Muruwul well, and watched the Julunggul swallowing the Wauwalak. When they were vomited out, Lu'ningu went all round the Muruwul country, swallowing all the young unmarried boys (termed *lu'nilu'ni*). But whereas the Wauwalak were vomited and became alive, the young boys were vomited dead, and did not revive. They had died while inside the Snake, and when they were vomited there was no flesh on their bodies; only bones emerged.

As a protest against this outrage by Lu'ningu, the remaining men held a large meeting and decided to kill the Snake," for he was no good, this Lu'ningu: he had swallowed all the young men and they had died". They compared the Lu'ningu with the Julunggul, saying: "Lu'ningu is no good, he vomits up his people dead. But Julunggul is all right; he vomited up the Wauwalak so that they were alive". So they hunted out Lu'ningu, spearing him until he died.

"What are we going to do ?" they asked one another then. So they made a large *jelmalandji* which stood upright in the ground, in memory of this Snake. That is, "they took a picture of Lu'ningu" saying, "we have to make this Snake, because we killed him". Some confusion exists here, in identifying the *jelmalandji* with the Lu'ningu; in the big Kunapipi rituals this object is said to represent the Julunggul who swallowed the Wauwalak. 773 778 796

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The following Table summarizes these aspects.

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TABLE

		Materialistic Aspect of Yirrkalla Religion	Spiritual Aspect of Yirrkalla Religion
Fundamental Aspects		Nature; Seasons; Vegetable and animal growth; reproductive faculties of man; survival of the group; basic drives (for example, food and sex)	
Repositories of Divine Power		Djanggawul; the Wauwalak. (Concept of Fertility Mother and Penis Snake): alone capable of releasing the power which brings about continuation	Unquestioning faith
Expressions and Instruments	Mythology	Djanggawul and Wauwalak Cycles (explaining the power of the "Divine" Beings)	Ideology, Religious philosophy and meditation
	Ritual	Sacred ritual and ceremony (of which the Kunapipi is merely one aspect). An instrument by which the "divine" power is released	Absorption in ritual as a "divine" purpose (spiritual edification)
Achievement		Production of necessities for physical continuance and survival. (Maintenance of *status quo*)	Spiritual growth. (Laws and ideals based on the behaviour of the "divine" Beings)

Here we observe the belief that ritual, as an expression of the sacred mythology, releases the "power" vested in the Divine Ancestral Beings for the ultimate welfare of the tribal group. This is primarily a materialistic aim, for its specific intent is the production of necessities for the physical continuation and survival of the people, the bringing into force of an elaborate mechanism that expresses man's innate selfishness and egocentricity. But as an adjunct to this thesis, Yirrkalla religion has an underlying non-materialistic thread, that is an expression of spiritual growth. Based as it is on an unquestioning acceptance of the religious doctrine, a belief in the omnipo-

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CHAPTER XII

FINALE

771 794 The foregoing chapters have indicated something of the fundamental doctrine of the Kunapipi cult, based as it is on the essential human and animal drives of food and sex, and including such important aspects as the maintenance of food supplies, and procreation, necessary for the continuation of both the human and natural species. In this respect the Kunapipi religious cult is not unlike many others that express the hopes and desires of simple and sophisticated peoples alike. And even when its principal intent is materialistic, it does not exclude spiritual conceptions: in fact, these latter are of major importance.

Here, in Aboriginal Australia, among contemporary aborigines, exists this vivid and vital cult, expressing their own religious view of life: it is correlated with their traditional background and social institutions, and so intimately concerns their spiritual personality structure. Moreover, it is well adapted to their particular environment, since the great Spirit Beings themselves are associated with the country the aborigines know and love; and each man, woman and child has a part in this religious concept, for he (or she) is akin to the Mother. That is to say, their religion is a response to their particular material and spiritual requirements, in such a way that it is a very real and important aspect of each person's life. There is no sharp demarcation between secular and sacred life, because the one is so closely interwoven with the other. This religious concept, too, is not confined to men; it is equally important and significant to women. Each sex has its own particular sphere of activity and interest.

The religion of an indigenous native group, which has had little or no alien contact, is a living faith, something quite inseparable from the pattern of everyday life and thought.

177 771 794 797 With the introduction of alien ideas, through intensive European contact, this fundamental faith is shattered to a greater or lesser degree, according to the intensity and type of that contact. In most parts of Arnhem Land where Missions have been established, there is the impact of Christian teaching, of ideals which are not intimately concerned with the life of the native people, which often contrast sharply with indigenous traditional themes, and which belong to a strange and different cultural background. The repercussions of this impact, therefore, are frequently severe.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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Christianity, with its attendant ritual and belief, is apparently inseparable, in this context, from Western European culture, and for that reason it assumes a dominant and militant aspect. The indigenous culture, however, lacking the other's wide range of material objects and technology, and the subtleties of fanatic evangelization, seems as a rule powerless to resist.

Missionaries on the north coast of Arnhem Land and elsewhere in this region have made little attempt to understand the underlying motives of native ideology and their religious view of life. The majority (with a couple of exceptions) contend that Aboriginal religion is not a religion in the strict sense of the word, for to most of them religion is translatable only in terms of Christianity. With this conventional bias, they see only certain superficial aspects of such cults as the Kunapipi,[1] which they have not attempted to link with fundamental belief. They have not appreciated the importance of the Fertility Mother and the Rainbow Snake, nor the stress on certain erotic features. Ceremonial copulation is viewed as debauchery and unbridled lust, while women are said to live in virtual terror of the use which is made of them at such a time. In our study of the Kunapipi cult, as it normally functions, we have observed a different picture.

It is not our purpose here, however, to defend Aboriginal religious belief and activity, nor to discuss the relevant virtues of each religion. We need mention only that in the region under discussion the impact of Christianity, as presented by the Missions, has produced some change in the indigenous religion. Moreover, change of this kind has been brought about not only through the active interference of the Church, but through the gradual and indirect introduction of European secular concepts. The Mission is not only an agency for the Christian religion. It is the vanguard too of all the more materialistic elements which attend European cultural life; for Christianity means, to most, Europeanization. The balanced life and economy of the aborigines has been irrevocably upset, with resulting disorganization. The Kunapipi too has suffered, and is rarely seen in its entirety to-day, although its basic rituals and concepts have as yet (in Arnhem Land for example) remained relatively unaltered. Its adherents have, however, been driven to secrecy; and its ceremonies are for the most part carried out in the bush, away from Mission Stations and settlements. Ceremonial copulation has been frowned upon by the Missions, and in some cases this element of the Kunapipi is either omitted altogether or carried out surreptitiously.

On the other hand, the Missions' almost unanimous opposition to

1. The question of sexual behaviour, in particular, seems to arouse strong reactions, when the indigenous culture offers manifestations that differ widely from accepted European conventions. It is apparently simpler in this case to condemn, than to study and investigate without prejudice.

6; Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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Can it continue to exist in its present form, in a situation of culture contact? Example has shown that under abnormal circumstances, when the inroads of an alien culture have attacked the social structure of the indigenous society, its survival odds are relatively low. Collapse of Aboriginal community life brings disillusionment, loss of faith in accepted doctrines, and consequent maladjustment. That is to say, as contact becomes more intensive, a cult of the Kunapipi variety will become correspondingly corrupted, and its principal intent will be overshadowed by the distortion of certain aspects which will inevitably serve to destroy it completely.

On the other hand, a cult of this type, which so adequately fulfils an aboriginal's religious requirements within his own cultural environment, is so much a part of his material and psychological make-up, and expresses the basic urges and necessities of his life, should surely find some place in his changing society, among widening interests. This should ideally be the case if the aboriginal is to retain something of his individuality, and not become merely a stereotyped imitation of the European. But this ideal form of adaptation is not to be found in North Australia to-day, and there are no indications that it will be so in the future. Although the indigenous religious faiths still retain their full significance in some areas, in others they are gradually changing, and their hold on the people's life is weakening. In some regions they are merely a shadow of their former selves, distorted to meet the selfish aims of a few maladjusted and frustrated tribal remnants.

Still, however, in outlying camps where aboriginal life proceeds comparatively undisturbed (and there are few such areas to-day) the twirling bullroarer is heard, and the answering call of the women; there is rhythmic singing, and the stamping of dancing feet on the sacred ground echoes through the quietness of the Bush. People have come together to renew their faith, to refresh themselves spiritually, and to ensure that the continuity of the seasons is maintained, as well as the continuance of the life they know and appreciate. The pervading influence of the Great Mother is, to them, a reality.

8: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1954
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western Arnhem Land, too, coming up from the south and the south-east almost to the coast near Goulburn Islands.

The north-eastern people, like their western neighbours, pay great attention to the outward expression of their religious ideas, to provide a guide to ritual behaviour and to impress certain concepts on the minds of postulants. Their sacred objects do not consist only of those introduced by Djanggawul, Laindjung and other Beings. In the *nara* and other rituals many beautifully made *rangga* are used, some associated with natural species or with totemic features, others with human organs and ancestral people. Usually conventionalised, they are made from hard or soft woods, cane or paperbark, sometimes bound with jungle-tree twine, and decorated with clan totemic designs and colourful feathered strings. Human figures carved from blocks of wood are painted and ornamented in a similar way. Many other sacred objects are used in the Wauwalak ceremonies — the *ubar* drum of the *ngurlmag*, for example, the tall grass-bound *Jelmalandji* posts of the *kumapipi*, and the long *julunggul* "trumpets" and dancing posts of the *djunggawon*. In western Arnhem Land, religious feeling finds concrete expression in the varied shapes and designs of the *maraiin* objects, which include representations of birds and animals. Their form and workmanship are usually pleasing to the eye, but to the craftsman this is of secondary importance.[2]

Let us summarise the place of indigenous religion among the people of Arnhem Land.

In Aboriginal societies throughout Australia, this religious faith has been the mainstay of social life, giving meaning and background to behaviour patterns and institutions. Most people believed unquestioningly in the essential "rightness" of their way of life. Everything was explained, each member of the community had a definite place in the scheme of things, and the future was well determined.

Today, however, the Aborigines find that conditions are rapidly changing. The pressure of contact is greater now than it has been in the past. Beliefs that they have held for centuries are being questioned, and new ways and ideas are being enforced.

8: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1954
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The old ceremonies, with their cycles of songs, are not performed so frequently, and the sacred objects are beginning to lose their significance. The religion and mythology which once held together all aspects of Aboriginal life are being weakened, and the traditional code no longer serves as a basis for the patterning of their lives. Instead the Aborigine is coming to rely more and more constantly on introduced criteria and beliefs, but because the change has been comparatively sudden he cannot adjust himself immediately to them, and so they fail to satisfy his needs.

We have referred more specially to the religion and associated beliefs of these Arnhem Landers, because no other aspect of their life expresses more fully the vividness and depth of their indigenous behaviour and thought. There are many other important elements in the Aboriginal cultures of Arnhem Land. Some will make their appearance in later Chapters, while the reader interested to learn more is referred to the anthropological works already mentioned. Our main purpose here has been to provide a cultural setting for our study of "outside" contact on the north coast of Arnhem Land. This, then, is the fundamental background of these Aboriginal societies which took the impact of contact, over a long period, with alien peoples.

431 "good luck" in hunting. They make the hunter *mel kärku-*
[777] *luk*, far seeing, (lit. eye-clear). Such objects are given regu-
778 larly to friends and to members of other clans, particularly
[604] to people who stand in the relationship of *wäkku* (son, woman speaking: sister's son, man speaking) but although they carry the obligation to make heavy ceremonial presentations in return, any idea of straight-out exchange—in the sense of economic equivalence, of barter or trade, in connection with things that are *yarkomirri*, is unthinkable.

784 Under certain circumstances, and after a lapse of time, a
778 rite may be performed to remove the tabu from these objects, particularly from canoe paddles, to enable the women and children to be fed on the fish or turtle secured from the canoe, after which they become *wäkkinŋu*, "ordinary" or non-sacred, and lose their *marr*, their "power" (to the initiated) and their "danger" (to the profane).

422 Objects of the *wäkkinŋu* type come under no such restric-
435 tions. In the category of the non-sacred are all a
[771] man's ordinary possessions, his spears and other weapons, canoe, fishing lines, nets, harpoons and all his personal equipment, and for a woman, her yam stick, domestic implements and utensils, her baskets—and in fact all her posses-
[562] sions. For no woman may possess or use any object which is *yarkomirri*.

000 In the foregoing account some of the incentives which lie behind the gathering of food and the manufacture of weapons and material objects have been described. A number of questions now arise. Does a man make all his own weapons and the implements which he requires for his own use, or does he acquire weapons from other people and in turn make them for others? If so, how are these exchanges made and on what terms; how are values assessed, payments made? Is the matter one of straight-out barter, the balancing

remaining with him all night. None of the medicinemen that I met in east Arnhem Land claimed to have a single *marngit* only, and the number varied from two to four or five or even more, as in the case of Wilindjango, who had six (Plate Jb).

The *marngitmirri*, as he gains experience in the cult, is able to see on the body of a victim of secret killing spear wounds which are not visible to ordinary people.

As the drawings in colour in Plates I and J indicate, there is a considerable variation in the concepts of the *marngit* entertained by the *marngitmirri*, but all agreed that these are *wakkinngu*—profane, in the sense of non-sacred, with the special implication that they are not associated with, or dedicated to, the *wangarr*, and so not subject to ritual or supernatural sanctions. The *marngit* and their cult are regarded, therefore, by the natives of Arnhem Land as apart altogether from totemism. This essential distinction was pointed out to me by my informants themselves. They emphasized it frequently by referring to their *marngit* as *warrakan*—animals—a term that they never used for their totems, except in reference to the actual animal form which the totems sometimes assumed in ancestral times—for, being *wangarr*, they had supernatural powers and were not subject to the restrictions and limitations of ordinary men. They were *wangarr*, hence supernatural.

The people always described their totems as *malli wangarr*—the spirits or shades of the ancestral culture heroes—and therefore, *yarkomirri*, literally with, or having, a name, dedicated ceremonially to the *wangarr*. On ceremonial occasions the obligatory presentations of *ngata* (food) are dedicated to the *wangarr* concerned by the *dalkarramirri*, who acts in the role of high priest. And because of their association with the *wangarr*, all totems or totemic objects are subject to supernatural sanctions and are still watched over by the *malli* of these *wangarr* who guard jealously the observance of the rituals associated with the heritage that they left behind.

The demarcation between what is sacred and what is profane, between *yarkomirri* and *wakkinngu*, emphasizes the recognition by these people of the essential distinction between *marngit* and totem, between religion and magic.

Notes

[1] The data presented in the paper were obtained when I was under commission by the Commonwealth Government in Arnhem Land, prior to the war, and during the war while O.C. Northern Territory Coastal Patrol and the Special Reconnaissance Unit, Norforce.

[2] *Oceania*, Vol. I, 1936, pp. 336–41.

[3] See Donald F. Thomson, 'Two Painted Skulls from Arnhem Land, with Notes on the Totemic Significance of the Designs.' MAN, 1939, 1.

[4] *Tortork* is heart in the strictly anatomical sense, but some of my informants declared that it was also the seat of the *malli*, or shade, a kind of non-material or spiritual manifestation, which has nothing to do with the shadow.

[p.102(B)]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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so it is with man's spirit. Moreover, according to native psychology, a man has two souls, and according to some beliefs, it is a man's bush or trickster spirit which goes to the Island of the Dead. But however that be, the more important of these two spirits of the dead does sojourn in the totemic well, and to make sure that the spirit arrives there, signs are made by pointing and singing to the grandfather to come for him. As one informant told Dr Warner, who studied the subject intensively, 'if we didn't sing, he might go bad because evil ghosts might catch him and take him out in the jungle country where they live. It is better that his old grandfather and his ancestors come and get him and take him straight to his clan well where his totem came from.'

Religion

Readers of Mr Chaseling's book will be impressed by the important part played by religion in the life of the Aborigines. Mythology and ritual, totemism and beliefs regarding the spirit of man, the Great Creator Spirit who is revealed in the Rainbow Serpent, and the 'mother goddess', are all part of this religious life. The ritual is the prescribed acting of the great myths by fully initiated men; the mythology provides the sanction and pattern for the rites and for present-day behaviour. The emphasis on the Creator Spirit (associated with the sky) and a kind of 'earth-mother' distinguished Arnhem Land from Central Australian mythology, though interest in the sky-world and a belief that it is the source of life-giving powers (especially through the Rainbow Serpent and the medicine-men), were widespread in Australia. Mr Chaseling's Chapter 17 shows how the natives of his region are fascinated by the sky-world and in their mythology reveal a desire to go to it.

Further details of north-east Arnhem Land myth and ritual are given in W. L. Warner's *A Black Civilization*. He also discusses fully the totemism of the region. A general

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114 introduction to this fundamental aspect of aboriginal life is given in A. P. Elkin's *The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them.*

771 779 Totemism is fundamentally a complex of beliefs and attitudes based on a doctrine of oneness of life shared by nature and man. In other words, natural species and phenomena are brought into man's social order; that is, they are regarded as members of his local groups, clans, and moieties. Usually, too, a bond that is both social and religious is established between a group of men and women on the one hand and one or more natural species on the other. The latter are the totems of the former. In what is termed cult-society (or 'lodge') totemism, the totem is the symbol of the whole set of myth and ritual, which is the clan's link with, and door into, the 'eternal dream-time', the state and life of the great heroes, the ancestors, the spirits.

796 Mr Chaseling refers to many rites and beliefs which belong to the aboriginal religious world. Those connected with blood, described in Chapter 5, are especially interesting. We notice the taboo on eating food, because of the shedding [262] of blood when obtaining it, or because of the presence of a corpse, and the rite for removing the taboo, which includes a 'totemic well', a sacred meal, and purification by fire. Another interesting rite is the singing of the myth of creation by the medicine-man as a cure (Chapter 10).

842 In Chapter 8, Mr Chaseling refers to the natives' belief regarding conception. The general reader may not be aware that in most regions of the continent, the Aborigines do not regard sexual intercourse as the cause of conception. Mr Chaseling says that was the case in north-east Arnhem Land, but that now, the view has been slightly modified; it is now held that intercourse is an act of preparation for, and an invitation to, the unborn spirit to enter the womb. This agrees with the findings of Spencer and Gillen and others for nearby regions. Dr Warner, however, came to the

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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YULENGOR

262 Lagoons overflow in the w[illegible]on and hundreds of acres
[133] of low-lying land are under water. It is country where water-
[222] lilies grow in profusion. Women dive for the root-stocks
[252] and roast great quantities of them. Lily seed-pods are eaten raw, sieved through network dilly-bags, or ground between stones and baked into cakes.

The most palatable of all vegetable food is probably the
[137] corm or swamp rush, 'rarkai', and these swamps are famous
[222] throughout Arnhem Land. Rarkai rushes cover brackish swamps near the coast, and women systematically turn over many acres of black mud in their search for the nut. In east Arnhem Land I know of several such swamps, each of which
[361] supported a hundred or even two hundred Yulengor for six
[796] weeks at a time. During the corm season the hordes make the swamps a rendezvous for corroborees, ceremonies, and initia-
[574] tions. Corms are about the size of marbles, and in addition to being the most nutritious of all their vegetable foods they possess a pleasant nutty flavour.

[771] Several foods have totemic significance and find a place in ceremonial practices. Probably the most important of these is 'ngutu', the nut of the cycad palm, and it is said that this yellowish brown nut was first eaten by spirit-Ancestors,
[773] who instructed their daughters in the art of preparing it.
[462] Legend declares that as the knowledge was received first by
[222] women, they have for all time to attend to the gathering and cooking of all vegetable foods.

262 Hard-shelled cycad nuts are cracked between stones, and
252 the kernels soaked in water for three or even five days. Most of the poison is thus leached out, and the pulp is wrapped in bark and buried in hot sand over which a fire is lit. Cycad meal can be baked into flat coarse cakes that sometimes weigh up to fifteen pounds, that keep for days, and can be
[574] carried long distances for use at ceremonial gatherings. 'Ngutu' has sustaining properties, and Yulengor live on it for weeks as they prepare for inter-tribal corroborees.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Creation Myths—Out of the Dawn

*[773] As with most primitive people, the story of Creation is of the utmost importance to the aboriginal. Everything he says
•[791] and does, from the songs he sings to the way he catches and cooks his food, is determined by the way it was done by his mythical creators. A striking similarity links aboriginal creation stories with the myths of all primitive peoples, even to the inclusion of a supernatural serpent. One Arnhem Land snake went so far as to eat two of the ancestral agents; today he is the most important living link with the spirit
[821] world. His voice is thunder, and lightning flashes from his tongue.

Legends in east Arnhem Land say that these mythical Ancestors came from 'over the sea' and 'beyond the dawn'; hordes in the west believe that their creative agents came from beyond the sunset.

[776]
*[773] Junkgowa, or creative Ancestresses, came from the spirit-world of Buralkor. Wangarr is the Great Spirit of Buralkor, and though vague and indefinite in form and purpose, he long ago expressed himself through semi-human Junkgowa-
[821] agents, and continues to reveal himself in any unusual happening, such as an eclipse, an earth tremor, or a cyclone.
[778] Junkgowa created important food-producing areas, unusual rock formations, peculiar water-holes and springs, which are links with the spirit-world.

Stories of creation vary greatly, for in east Arnhem Land
[184] the Junkgowa travelled some three hundred miles up and down amongst a group of three dozen hordes, and now each horde jealously preserves a detailed account of what

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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CHAPTER NINETEEN

Stone Age Religion

IT IS OFTEN asked if aboriginals are religious and if there is an aboriginal religion. That 'man is a religious animal' and that he is 'incurably religious' are theories that have been widely accepted. Nevertheless it is surprising to discover the extent of aboriginal religious beliefs. Their beliefs are primitive, yet they include the early forms of most well-known religions, and cover to an astonishing degree much of the content in fundamental religion. Religion may be defined in many terms, but a score or more of these widely varying definitions cover the indefinite scope of aboriginal beliefs. Aboriginal religion is one of 'beginnings', and the sum total of his beliefs resolves itself into a deep well of proto-religion in which is found fetishism, tabu, magic, awe, fear, totemism, and prayer to departed human spirits.

Fetishism includes the belief that supernatural powers may be harnessed by wearing a charm of hair, skin, blood, or bone taken from the body of a dead man.[1] Wandering spirits are feared, the world is full of them and unexplained happenings are attributed to them.[2]

Tabus are carefully observed and ceremonial abstinence is dependent on the fear of definite consequences[3] whilst, because of its negative reaction, Stone Age men refrain from doing certain things for fear of the evil that will come upon them, as when women abstain from eating men's food and from hunting their game during menstruation.[4]

[1] Chapter 5, 'Jungle Lore and Etiquette.'
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Chapter 6, 'From Hand to Mouth.'
[4] Chapter 5, 'Jungle Lore and Etiquette.'

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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Magic profoundly influences everyday beliefs and habits, and an ordinary nomad, as well as the witch-doctor, may set in operation magical powers.[1]

Prayer is offered to the spirits of the dead, and they are not only called on to receive departing human spirits, but in time of sickness, a man will call on the waterspout to carry his prayer to the spirits of his relatives.[2] A patient may also enter a totemic waterhole inhabited by a great mythical snake, which will effect the faith-cure.[3] Mythical serpents are called on for help, and receive prayers in time of acute danger and distress.

Makarola told me that he had been overtaken by darkness when returning with his family after a day's fishing. A strong wind arose and the canoe was blown out to sea, waves half-filled it, and whilst wives and children baled frantically in the darkness, he toiled to keep the dug-out into the wind. Makarola then remembered his totem and called on it for help. He said that in that instant he saw a 'bright light' which 'filled' his head. By the light he was assured that they would be brought safely to land, and when the wind abated, the family landed in an exhausted condition.

Though awe and fear weigh heavily in aboriginal religion, the nomad's religious outlook and practices are best summed up under the term 'Totemism'. Such totemism links man and nature and goes back to the ancestral creators of Junkgowa, who made the earth and its inhabitants, instituted present-day laws, habits and customs, and defined for all time the nomad's outlook and beliefs. Totemic beliefs and the record of their bestowal are preserved in the Ngara ceremonies, which are linked with the totem centres where the hero-Ancestors performed their mighty deeds. Behind the supernatural Ancestors, and beyond the present world, is the spirit-land of Buralkor, from whence they came.

[1] Chapter 13, 'Black Magic.'
[2] Chapter 10, 'Medicine-Men and Magic.'
[3] *Ibid.*

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power behind totem centres, and human spirits created and received again in Buralkor by him after death.

It soon becomes obvious that to arrive at an understanding of the nomad, and to win his complete confidence, there must be an appreciation of his religion. His religion runs down through his secret life to everyday arts and crafts, which were all given him by the Junkgowa and determines even his methods of food-gathering and cooking. All these things are done in a particular manner, because the Junkgowa so instituted them. In the network of the nomad's life the simplest of activities are linked to his highest beliefs and noblest aspirations. They stand or fall together, and no part of his habits and customs can be tampered with without the risk of doing violence to the entire structure of his life and culture. An effective approach to the nomad can be made only on the basis of religion; that is, by an appreciation of his habits, outlook, and philosophy of life. Be a man trader, adventurer, or missionary, he will find a ready welcome if he is prepared to respect their laws, both common and sacred, which are all interwoven and rest on ancient Junkgowa creation myths.

Several old men were talking together and invited me to join them. One of them said: 'We like those stories of Jesus that you tell us: He is the white man's Junkgowa. Our Junkgowa came from Wangarr and we can see now that, in the same way, Jesus is the white man's Junkgowa.' It was instantly clear that they accepted Jesus as the equal of their Junkgowa—and no more. If such an estimate were accepted it would preclude any development in their outlook, aspiration, and custom. I suggested to these primitive philosophers that many Junkgowa had taught the white man, although they went by the name of 'prophets'. Second, their teachings were incomplete and vague till God the Eternal Spirit, known to aborigines as Wangarr, sent His Son Jesus to complete the revelation. Because of the